Increase of berths in reserved coaches

†676.SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that a result of increase in number of berths from 72 to 81 in reserve coaches, passengers are facing great inconvenience;

(b) whether complaints are received from passengers about the inconvenience caused due to this increase;

(c) whether any complaint has been received by Government in this regard or Government is aware of the public discontentment; and

(d) if so, the measures through which Government is considering to solve this serious problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. References from passengers about additional berths in the Sleeper coaches mainly were of inconvenience and discomfort caused by increased congestion and inadequate space.

(d) The policy has been reviewed. It has now been decided to discontinue the scheme of provision of additional side middle berths in sleeper class coaches. Such berths provided in the already modified coaches shall be gradually removed within a period of six months.

Fare concession to handicapped persons

677. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that handicapped persons do not get railway fare concessions in Rajdhani trains; and

(b) if so, the reasons for not extending the concession in those trains to handicapped persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Rajdhani trains are premium trains in which scope of concession has been kept limited to patronize full fare paying passengers.

Encroachment of railway land

678. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether for management of railway land, there are no separate land management cells in most of the zones and divisions and the work is entrusted to officials with other duties who are not trained to function as Estate Officers to decide on the cases of encroachments;

(b) whether Railways had given an assurance in Parliament in 1999 that there would be no fresh encroachments on railway land and whether despite this assurance more than 16,000 new encroachments have taken place; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the reasons for a large number of pending cases under the Public Premises Eviction Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Classification of goods for freight determination

†679.SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways have categorised goods under different categories for the purpose of deciding freight fare and if so, the total number of such categories existing during December, 2008;

(b) the number of goods included recently in each category; and

(c) the freight charges under each category?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. There are a total of 16 different categories for the classification of goods including 4 low rated commodities.

(b) Number of commodities included in each Class are given in Goods Tariff No. 45 Part-I (Vol. II) as amended from time to time.

(c) Distance based freight rates from 100 km to 3500 km. are given in the Goods Tariff No. 44, Part-II, effective from 1.7.2006.

Closure of printing presses of railway

†680.MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact his Ministry has decided to close down Railways' printing presses which were running for last four decades;

(b) if so, the reasons for closing down of printing presses;

(c) the manner in which the stationery meant for Railways would get printed in view of closure of printing presses; and

(d) what is Railways' planning for rehabilitation of employees rendered unemployed as a result of closure of printing presses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. It has been decided for partial merger of small presses with the major presses.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Quality of food supplied in trains

681. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:
SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.